

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-13, 15-23, 25-27 and 30-35 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 14 and 24 will have been amended and claims 36-54 will have been submitted for consideration by the Examiner. Applicants note that new dependent claims 36-46 are dependent upon independent claim 14 and are based on cancelled dependent claims 2-12 that were dependent from independent claim 1, and new dependent claims 47-48 are dependent upon independent claim 24 and are based on cancelled dependent claims 16-17 that depended from canceled independent claim 15. Applicants also note that claim 49 is based on cancelled claim 30, and that claim 50 is based on cancelled claim 31. Applicants further note that claims 51-54 are dependent on independent claim 50 and are based on cancelled dependent claims 32-35 that depended upon canceled independent claim 31.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Initially, Applicants would like to express their appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided.

Turning to the merits of the action, the Examiner has rejected claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. By the present amendment, Applicants have canceled claim 13 without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection have been rendered moot.

The Examiner also has rejected claims 1-24 and 28-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by KITADA (US 2006/0190622). .

As noted above, Applicants have amended claims 14 and 24 and have submitted claims 36-54 for consideration by the Examiner. Applicants have canceled claims 1-13, 15-23, 25-27 and 30-35 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejection based on the pending claims and will discuss the rejection with respect to the pending claims in the present application, as will be set forth hereinbelow. The claims have been amended merely to clarify the subject matter, but not to narrow the scope of the claims.

Applicants' pending claims relate to a multifunction apparatus having at least a copying function. The multifunction apparatus is connected to a discrete server via a network, the discrete server storing information regarding menus of a plurality of multifunction apparatuses corresponding to a plurality of user IDs. Each of the menus is displayable on the multifunction apparatus. The multifunction apparatus has a display that displays a menu, the menu representing functions of the multifunction apparatus. The multifunction apparatus also has a panel configured for input of a user ID. Further, the multifunction apparatus has a controller that, when the user ID is input via the panel, communicates with the discrete server, receives the information regarding the menu corresponding to the input user ID from the information regarding the menus of the plurality of multifunction apparatuses stored in the discrete server, and displays, on the display, the menu corresponding to the input user ID based on the information regarding the menu received from the discrete server (utilizing the terminology of claim 1 as a non-limiting example). Thus, another menu can be displayed on the display based on input of another user ID. Claim 24 recites a related server, claim 49 recites a related system, and claims 50-54 recite related methods.

In direct contrast, KITADA relates to a system in which a multifunction device 20 is connected to a scan server 40. In this system, a user of the multifunction device 20 can access a

directory server 60 to search for information stored in the directory server 60 via the scan server 40 (see paragraph [0025]). The directory server 60 stores information such as the names, addresses, e-mail addresses, phone/fax numbers, other type of destination information (see paragraph [0024]). Thus, the user of the multifunction device 20 can scan a document at the multifunction device 20, and can request a search of the company's global directory stored at the directory server 60. The scan server 40 can pass the search request to the directory server 60, can receive the search results from the directory server 60 and can pass the search results to the multifunction apparatus 20. The multifunction apparatus 20 can temporarily store and display the search results (see paragraph [0025]).

KITADA also teaches a system in which the multifunction apparatus 20 downloads, from the scan server 40, a user's home page for display. The user's home page can include a start page, as shown in Fig. 3. The user's home page can be a kind of default or portal page that is initially displayed after authentication (see paragraph [0051]).

However, KITADA fails to disclose at least a multifunction apparatus connected to a discrete server that stores information regarding menus of a plurality of multifunction apparatuses corresponding to a plurality of user IDs. KITADA also fails to disclose at least a multifunction apparatus that, when the user ID is input via the panel, is configured to communicate with the discrete server, to receive the information regarding the menu corresponding to the input user ID from the information regarding the menus of the plurality of the multifunction apparatuses stored in the discrete server, and to display, on the display (of the multifunction apparatus), the menu corresponding to the user ID based on the information regarding the menu received from the discrete server, wherein another menu can be displayed on the multifunction apparatus based on another input user ID.

Rather, KITADA merely teaches that the same user's home page is displayed as a default for any user. In KITADA, the MFD 20 can inquire whether a user entered login information, such as, a user name, a password, and a domain name (col. 6, paragraph [0051]). However, the user name, the password, and the domain name are used for user authentication (col. 6, paragraph [0051]), but KITADA fails to teach that the login information corresponds to the user's home page, since KITADA fails to disclose a discrete server that stores information regarding menus of a plurality of multifunction apparatuses corresponding to a plurality of user IDs.

In other words, there is no indication that a discrete server stores information regarding menus of various multifunction apparatuses in correspondence with a plurality of user IDs.

In setting forth the rejection, the Examiner asserted that KITADA discloses a panel (which is part of the multifunction apparatus), which is configured to disclose the menu, the menu representing functions of the multifunction apparatus. In support of this assertion, the Examiner cites paragraph 27 of KITADA. However, it is respectfully submitted that KITADA does not disclose this feature in the claimed combination and that the Examiner's interpretation of the above-noted paragraph of KITADA is in error.

In particular, paragraph 27 of KITADA indicates that the scan server 40, which acts as an intermediate agent between a plurality of computerized services, is provided with a display that is configured to display the plurality of services based on a request from the browser 25. Thus, it is the scan server 40 which displays the services of the various devices such as the network domain controller 50, the directory/address book server 60, the fax server 80, the e-mail server 70, and the other applications 90. However, the display being referred to in paragraph 27 is not part of the multifunction apparatus but is part of the scan server 40 which is discrete from the

multifunction apparatus 40. Moreover, the services being performed are services, not of the multifunction apparatus, but services of the various computerized services. Although paragraph 27 does indicate that the multifunction device has a display, the display of the multifunction device is configured to prompt entry of a plurality of parameters such as e-mail addresses, fax numbers and billing codes.

Thus, at least a panel, as recited in Applicant's claims 14 and 24, which is part of the recited multifunction apparatus, is not disclosed in KITADA. For this reason alone, Applicant's claims are clearly patentable over KITADA.

Further, as a corollary of the above deficiency, the controller, as recited in Applicant's claims is also not taught, disclosed or rendered obvious by KITADA, and for this additional reason, Applicant's claims are submitted to be clearly patentable over KITADA.

Further, KITADA teaches a system which provides three levels of user authentication. Under a first authentication level, any user can use the multifunction apparatus 20. Under a second authentication level, it is determined whether the user is domain authenticated by the network domain controller 50. If the user is domain authenticated, the user can use the multifunction apparatus 20 and its functions. Under a third authentication level, the user is authenticated by the directory server. For example, employees of a particular division of the company may have access to the portion of the directory that corresponds to that division only. Under the second and third authentication levels, the system can create a user profile such that upon authentication, the system provides access to the user only for certain functions that corresponds to the user profile. Different authenticated users can have different profiles and thus have access to different functions (see, paragraphs [0029]-[0032]).

However, in KITADA, the embodiment merely teaches that employees of a particular division of the company have access to the portion of the directory that corresponds to that division only, and more sensitive information can thus be protected and accessible only by certain individuals within the company (see, paragraph [0031]). In other words, KITADA does not contain any disclosures regarding information regarding a menu corresponding to a user ID, as recited herein.

Thus, KITADA fails to disclose at least a multifunction apparatus that, when the user ID is input via the panel, is configured to communicate with the discrete server, to receive the information regarding the menu corresponding to the input user ID from the information regarding the menus of the plurality of multifunction apparatuses stored in the discrete server, and to display, on the display, the menu corresponding to the user ID based on the information regarding the menu received from the discrete server, wherein another menu can be displayed on the display based on another input user ID.

Thus, pending claims are clearly distinguished over KITADA.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that numerous features recited in Applicants' pending claims are not disclosed nor rendered obvious by KITADA cited by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejections, and an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have amended the rejected claims, have submitted new claims for consideration by the Examiner, and have canceled rejected claims without prejudice or disclaimer.

With respect to the pending claims, Applicants have pointed out the features thereof and have contrasted the features of the pending claims with the disclosure of the reference. Applicants have pointed out the shortcoming of the cited reference with respect to the recitations of the pending claims.

Accordingly, Applicants have provided a clear evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all claims in the present application and respectfully request an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

Applicant notes that the status of the present invention is after final rejection and that Applicants do not have a right to amend an application once a final rejection is issued. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the present amendment is appropriate for entry under the guidelines set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.


In particular, the present amendment does not raise any new issues requiring further consideration or search but rather revises the claim language to more clearly emphasize the features of Applicant's invention and to emphasize the distinctions therebetween and the disclosure of the prior art.

Accordingly, entry of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application is respectfully requested in due course.

The amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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